THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) The members of the Fifth Pay Commission visited Malaysia, New Zealand, Canada and United Kingdom. The period of their stay in these countries was as under:

Kuala Lumpur	(Malaysia)	—Three days.
Wellington	(New Zealand)	— Four days.
Ottawa	(Canada)	—ThreeDays.
London	(United Kingdom)	— Four days.

(b) The Visits were performed during 1995-96. The total expenditure incurred on these visits was Rs. 15.78 lakhs approximately. The provision in the budget for 1995-96 for this purpose was Rs. 20.00 lakhs.

Proposal for Reduction of Corporate Tax and Abolition of Double Taxation

1080. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All India Association of Industries has urged the Finance Ministry to reduce the corporate tax to thirty five percent and abolish double taxation to boost exports and give an impetus to the capital markets; and

(b) the other simplification proposed to be undertaken to widen the tax net?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P: VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government proposals are contained in the Finance Bill, 1997.

Government order regarding Investigations of Bank Officials

1081. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRI O.P. KOHLI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued an order that the CBI will not investigate the affairs of bank officals above the rank of General Manager (equivalent to Deputy Secretary) without prior permission from the Ministry of Finance;

(b) if so, the reasons for the move to 'shield' bank officials and interference into the working of the prime investigating agency; and

(c) the steps taken to withdraw the order?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) The Government have not curtailed the powers of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). According to the Single Directive, as amended from time to time, which has been issued after taking into account the views of the CBI, in regard to decision making level officers (Joint Secretary or equivalent or above) in the Central Government or such officers as are or have been on deputation to Public Sector Undertaking; Board level officers in Public Sector Undertaking; Officers of the Reserve Bank of India of the level equivalent to Joint Secretary or above in the Central Goverment, Executive Directors and above of the SEBI and Chairman and Managing Directors and Executive Directors and such of the Bank officers who are one level below the Board of Nationalised banks, there should be prior sanction of the Secretary of the Ministry/Department concerned before CBI takes up any enquiry (Preliminary Enquiry or Regular Case) including ordering search in respect of them. This provision in the Single Directive has been provided to ensure that the honest officers at the decision making level are protected against unnecessary investigation while the corrupt and guilty are punished. There is no proposal to withdraw the directive in this regard.

Newsitem Regarding slow down in Economy

1082. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the "The Tribune" dated 5th February, 1997, under this caption "Economy to slow down";

(b) if so, the full details thereof, sectorwise and the reasons therefor; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?